

Before the FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of 2002 Biennial Regulatory Review -
Review of the Commission's Broadcast Ownership Rules
and Other Rules Adopted Pursuant to Section 202
of the Telecommunications Act of 1996,
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking,
MM Docket No. 02-277, (rel. Sept. 23, 2002)

To: The Secretary, FCC Commissioners, and Chief, Media Bureau

In the matter of Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules: If its goals truly are to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, the FCC must retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry and, if anything, should be strengthened.

The studies commissioned by the FCC do not accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. While there may indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. I want that right protected for all Americans. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised.

The public interest will best be served in this current matter by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition, I support the FCC's plan to hold a public hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA in February 2003. I strongly encourage the Commission to hold similar hearings in all parts of the country and solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. It is extremely important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest. That is, after all, the way a good democracy should proceed.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process.

Thank you,

Belinda Martineau, Ph.D.

